

## Student Handbook

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Welcome to the VA New York Harbor Healthcare System Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) Center. This Student Handbook will serve as your guide during your experience in our CPE Center. The requirements, resources, curriculum and policies and procedures of our Center are enclosed in our Student Handbook. While it is not a contract, this Handbook will be your guide.

### Welcome Letter

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Welcome to VA New York Harbor Healthcare System (VA NYHHS). We are pleased that you have chosen to train in the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) Center at our facility. On behalf of VA NYHHS, we look forward not only to your CPE learning but also your valuable, caring ministry to our Veterans, their families, loved ones and our staff.

We are excited to share with you our VA mission and identity as a comprehensive health care facility in New York City that is committed to providing the highest quality care to veterans. You will meet and interact with people from different disciplines in the health care environment. What you offer in the spiritual care arena contributes to the work of the healing team. You will have opportunities to interact with myriad patients, their loved ones and staff coming from a variety of cultures and faiths.

We are proud of our CPE Center and believe that it will help you accomplish your learning goals and objectives. We welcome hearing about your experience here; your feedback is invaluable.

### Mission Statement

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We provide an educational process to prepare qualified chaplaincy students to function effectively as professionals committed to spiritual care. This process is designed to foster spiritual competence, spiritual formation, spiritual reflection, ethical competence and knowledge of veteran issues. This program prepares students for eligibility with their respective denominational endorsing bodies

**VA NEW YORK HARBOR HEALTHCARE SYSTEM  
CLINICAL PASTORAL EDUCATION**

## **Vision Statement**

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We are committed to:

- Provide diverse experiences for students within VA NYHHS and through collaboration with other organizations.
- Provide opportunities to work with interdisciplinary programs and special projects.
- Provide staff with continuing education regarding the role of the chaplain, the nature of spiritual care, and its integration into patient care.
- Provide CPE staff, faculty and mentors with ongoing opportunities for professional development.
- Provide education for the Professional Advisory Committee so that new program goals and objectives genuinely reflect the contemporary trends and future expressions for spiritual care within the health care field.

## **A Philosophy of Clinical Pastoral Education**

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CPE is essentially an experience-based form of theological education that is led by a certified pastoral educator (supervisor) with a small group of peers in a common learning environment. In addition to a variety of small groups that are primarily designed for reflection on identity issues and skill development; the student meets regularly with his/her supervisor in a individual supervisory session. The learning experience of each student is guided by a mutually agreed upon learning contract that often changes as the unit progresses. Each student's learning agenda is different given his/her learning needs, maturity level, and his/her life experience.

However, there are some common themes in most every CPE experience. For instance, learning issues of authority, pastoral identity, and interpersonal effectiveness are present in just about any CPE experience. As trust within the peer group and between the student and supervisor is fostered and developed, experiential learning begins to take place. Hopefully, this will be your experience as you enter into this rich learning setting and time-tested learning method. CPE is designed to increase the student's effectiveness as a pastor/minister and as a person to people in the midst of crisis.

Allow your experiences to begin to teach you as you reflect upon the meaning of your ministry as the weeks begin to unfold. Do not hesitate to share your thoughts and feelings with your peers and your CPE supervisor, as your ability to be transparent and open are almost always the necessary ingredients in a meaningful CPE experience.

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### **CPE (Level I/Level II)**

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At the VA NYHHS the CPE (Level I/Level II) Program's objective is the development of competent ministers via the development of five specific competencies, a) pastoral formation, b) pastoral competence, c) pastoral reflection, d) ethics competence, and e) knowledge of veterans' issues.

This Center offers CPE (Level I/Level II) on a year long, full time basis, on a part time basis and as a summer program via three programs, the Residency Program, the Extended Unit Program and the Summer Unit Program, respectively. Each of the three CPE (Level I/Level II) programs offers a structured system of components (e.g., supervision, curriculum, experiences in ministry to others, peer group, learning contract, etc.) in which clinical pastoral learning can occur according to ACPE guidelines.

- The Residency Program is a year-long, full-time program that allows the student to complete four CPE units. By definition, a unit of CPE is defined as at least 100 contact hours of structured group and individual education, accompanied by the supervised clinical practice of ministry of training, with a combined time of no less than 400 hours. The residency program runs from mid-September to mid-September.
- The Extended Unit Program allows students to complete one unit of CPE by attending the program on a part-time basis. The extended unit program typically runs from September through April, but some flexibility is possible provided the student completes the required 400 combined hours.
- The Summer Unit Program is an eleven week, full time program that allows the student to complete one CPE program unit. The summer unit program runs from June through August.

### **Supervisory CPE**

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At VA NYHHS, the Supervisory CPE program's objective is the development of supervisors competent in the art, theory and practice of CPE supervision via six additional competencies:

- a) competence as a pastoral supervisor;
- b) competence in the theories of supervision;
- c) competence in the practice of CPE individual supervision;
- d) competence in the practice of CPE group supervision;
- e) competence in CPE program design & implementation; and
- f) competence in pastoral education.

It assumes full development of the five CPE (Level I/Level II) competencies. Supervisory education students without prior training in ethics competence and/or knowledge of veterans' issues will have the opportunity to develop these fundamentals competencies during their first unit of supervisory training.

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## **How to Apply**

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The VA NYHHS CPE Center encourages any eligible person interested in pursuing professional training for ministry to apply. This includes lay persons as well as members of the clergy and religious congregations. Preference is given to applicants with a Master's of Divinity degree or equivalent. The Center maintains an open admissions process through which all eligible persons are invited to apply regardless of race, color, gender, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or physical disability.

Interested persons should contact the VA NYHHS CPE Center to request an information packet.

### **CPE (Level I/Level II) Admission Requirements**

- A high school diploma or GED
- Ordination by a faith community or a commission to function in ministry by an appropriate religious authority
- Three letters of recommendation
- Meeting all applicable federal security and medical requirements
- Passing the Federal clearance for employment

Applicants seeking a paid residency have additional requirements as follows:

- United States citizenship
- Good standing with an endorsing religious body approved by the VA National Chaplain Center
- Ordination eligible
- Master's of Divinity or equivalent degree

### **Supervisory CPE Admission Requirements**

- Documented completion of Level 1 and Level 2 CPE Programs
- A Masters of Divinity degree or equivalent
- Board Certification as a chaplain by a national cognate group
- Two years of pastoral care practice
- Faith group endorsement for ministry including supervisory education training
- ACPE membership

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## **The Application Form**

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The VA NYHHS CPE Center uses ACPE's Application Form. This is available at our CPE Center or from ACPE online in both PDF and Word formats at:

- PDF: [http://www.acpe.edu/acroread/CPE\\_application.pdf](http://www.acpe.edu/acroread/CPE_application.pdf)
- Word: [http://www.acpe.edu/word\\_docs/app\\_cpe.doc](http://www.acpe.edu/word_docs/app_cpe.doc)

The application is comprehensive and includes the following:

- A reasonably full account of your life;
- A description of your spiritual growth and development;
- A description of your work (vocational) history;
- An account of a "helping incident" in which you were the person who provided the help;
- Your impressions of Clinical Pastoral Education, including any personal and/or professional learning goals and issues that you have at this time and how you believe that CPE will help you to attain or address these learning goals and issues.

In addition, you will be asked to complete an admissions interview. If you are an international applicant, you will need appropriate documentation from U.S. Immigration. If you are an applicant with prior CPE you will be asked to attach all previous self and supervisory evaluations. Finally, you will be asked for a copy of your current resume.

## **ACPE Accreditation and Information**

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The VA NYHHS CPE Center is accredited by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc. (ACPE) to provide Level I CPE, Level II CPE and Supervisory CPE programs.

Information and queries concerning ACPE can be obtained or made through the following:

***Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc.***

***1549 Clairmont Road***

***Suite 103***

***Decatur, Georgia 30033***

***(404) 320-1472***

***<http://www.acpe.edu>***

ACPE provides answers to FAQ for prospective students at <http://www.acpe.edu/StudentsFAQ.html>.